



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
[www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)

| APPLICATION NO.   | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|---|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 10/565,394  | 01/23/2006  | Masanari Kobayashi   | NS-US055263         | 2050             |
| 22919   | 7590        | 11/21/2008           | EXAMINER            |                  |
| GLOBAL IP COUNSELORS, LLP<br>1233 20TH STREET, NW, SUITE 700<br>WASHINGTON, DC 20036-2680 |             |                      |                     | PHAN, HAU VAN    |
| ART UNIT  |             | PAPER NUMBER         |                     |                  |
| 3618  |             |                      |                     |                  |
| MAIL DATE   |             | DELIVERY MODE        |                     |                  |
| 11/21/2008  |             | PAPER                |                     |                  |

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

|                              |                        |                     |  |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--|
| <b>Office Action Summary</b> | <b>Application No.</b> | <b>Applicant(s)</b> |  |
|                              | 10/565,394             | KOBAYASHI ET AL.    |  |
|                              | <b>Examiner</b>        | <b>Art Unit</b>     |  |
|                              | Hau V. Phan            | 3618                |  |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 November 2008.  
 2a) This action is **FINAL**.                    2b) This action is non-final.  
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 2,3,6-8,10-12,14-16,21 and 22 is/are pending in the application.  
 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.  
 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.  
 6) Claim(s) 2,3,6-8,10-12,14-16,21 and 22 is/are rejected.  
 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.  
 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.  
 10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
     Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
     Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).  
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
 a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:  
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)           |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .                                    |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>11/18/2008</u> . | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
|   | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                          |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Allowable Subject Matter***

1. The indicated allowability of claims 2-3, 6-7, 10-12, 14-16 and 21 are withdrawn in view of the reference(s) to Nowka et al. (6,415,603) in view of Hamada et al. (5,232,989). Rejections based on the cited reference(s) follow.

### ***Information Disclosure Statement***

2. The information disclosure statement (IDS) submitted on 11/18/2008 is being considered by the examiner.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. **Claims 2-3, 6-8, 10-12, 14-16 and 21-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nowka et al. (6,415,603) in view of Hamada et al. (5,232,989).**

Nowka et al. in figures 1-2, disclose an engine exhaust system for a vehicle, comprising at least two flexible couplings (30, 32) having elastic characteristics, positioned at two different locations in the exhaust system. The at least two flexible

coupling includes an upstream flexible coupling and a downstream flexible coupling (not number, at both end of flexible couplings); an upstream component positioned (26, 12) further upstream of the upstream flexible coupling; a downstream component (52) positioned further downstream of the downstream flexible coupling and mounted to a body of the vehicle. Nowka et al. also disclose an intermediate component (34) positioned between the upstream flexible coupling and the downstream flexible coupling and having mass. The intermediate component is being coupled to the upstream component via the upstream flexible coupling and coupled to the downstream component via the downstream flexible coupling. The intermediate component is being free of direct connections to the body of the vehicle between the upstream and downstream flexible couplings such that the intermediate component freely floats (not mounted to the vehicle body) between the upstream and downstream flexible couplings with respect to the body of the vehicle. Nowka et al. disclose the flexible coupling. Therefore; a dynamic damper will be formed by virtue of the elastic characteristics and the mass. Nowka et al. fail to show the flexible couplings being selected to optimize the resonant frequency of the dynamic damper.

Hamada et al. in figures 1-2, teach an exhaust pipe for motor vehicle comprising first and second flexible couplings (20, 22). The first and second flexible couplings being selected such that a resonant frequency of a section formed by the upstream flexible coupling, the downstream flexible coupling, and the intermediate component is lower than 20-30Hz (col. 4, lines 5-50). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the engine exhaust system for a

vehicle of Nowka et al. with the exhaust pipe having first and second flexible couplings being selected such that a resonant frequency of a section formed by the upstream flexible coupling, the downstream flexible coupling, and the intermediate component is lower than 20-30Hz as taught by Hamada et al. in order to reduce vibrations of the vehicle body.

Regarding claims 3, 11, 15 and 21-22, Hamada et al. teach a mass of the intermediate component, which is selected to optimize the resonant frequency of the dynamic damper.

Regarding claim 6, Nowja et al. disclose the upstream flexible coupling, which is configured and arranged to be closer to an engine than to a muffler and the downstream flexible coupling is configured and arranged to be closer to the muffler than to the engine, and the downstream component is configured and arranged to be positioned between the downstream flexible coupling and the muffler, the downstream component being configured and arranged to be mounted to the body of the vehicle.

Regarding claim 7, Hamada et al. teach the upstream flexible coupling having a first elastic characteristic and the downstream flexible coupling has a second elastic characteristic. The first and second elastic being selected such that a resonant frequency of the section formed by the flexible couplings and the intermediate component is lower than 30Hz.

Regarding claim 8, Hamada et al. teach the intermediate component having a mass which is selected such that a resonant frequency of the section formed by the flexible couplings and the intermediate component is lower than 30 Hz.

Regarding claims 12, 16, Nowja et al. disclose each of the upstream flexible coupling and the downstream flexible coupling including a spherical joint (not number).

***Conclusion***

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hau V. Phan whose telephone number is 571-272-6696. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30AM-4:00PM.

The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Hau V Phan/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3618